

# Radstock Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109927
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wokingham District Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	288537
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Thrusell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	426
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Kenwick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs D Derrick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2002
<b>School address</b>	Radstock Lane Lower Earley Reading RG6 5UZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 986 9050
<b>Fax number</b>	0118 961 1119

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Radstock is a large, popular two-form entry primary school. It serves a generally advantaged area. Just over a quarter of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, but very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is below average. A new building project is half way through completion. The school has a Healthy Schools and an ICT (information and communication technology) Mark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Radstock Primary is a good school with a number of outstanding features. The committed and enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher is strongly recognised by the parents. She is well supported by the senior management team and governing body, so ensuring pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. These are promoted by an excellent, very well enriched curriculum, which takes the fullest account of pupils' backgrounds, abilities and personal needs. Outstanding links with parents, the community, other schools and agencies contribute to the extremely high level of care for pupils. One parent commented, 'I think Radstock is a fabulous school. My sons are flourishing.'

Pupils greatly enjoy all aspects of school life, shown in their eagerness to attend school and the good progress they make. They particularly enjoy being able to use computers, the trips they go on, and the many opportunities provided for sport and physical activity that encourage them to keep fit. They have a very good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet. Pupils especially value the friendships they make, demonstrated by a tremendous sense of harmony throughout the school between all pupils. Pupils are extremely polite and well behaved. They feel extremely safe in school, knowing that if they have any concerns adults will always listen to them and do something about it. Peer mediators take their role very seriously, sorting out any minor squabbles. Attitudes to learning are outstanding, contributing to the good progress pupils make throughout the school.

Assessments made at the end of Year 2 show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Test results at the end of Year 6 last year show that standards were, and remain, well above average in English, mathematics and science. The school meticulously tracks the progress pupils make throughout the school, so identifying and providing additional support for those not making the expected rate of progress. Results are carefully analysed for weaknesses in subjects. Relative weaknesses were identified in writing and in some aspects of mathematics, which the staff have identified as priorities in the school development plan. These are being addressed with some success.

Good teaching overall contributes to pupils' good achievement. Lessons are well planned and pupils are given very clear guidance on what they are learning and how they can gauge their success. There are weaknesses in the frequency and rigour of lesson observations, which have resulted in some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning. Evaluations of lessons do not always provide a sharp enough focus on how practice could be further improved to make all teaching consistently good or better.

The school is accurate in its self-evaluation. Given recent improvements, particularly in writing, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children are well provided for in the Foundation Stage. A very caring environment supports children in their learning. They enter with the level of attainment expected for their age. They make good progress here and, when they start in Year 1, the majority are working well towards the goals expected of them. Very friendly links with parents and their confidence in the school mean that children quickly settle into school and its routines. Planning shows a good balance between activities directed by staff and times for children to explore and discover for themselves.

Children have targets to encourage them to try different activities. Planning further identifies points for observation and assessment, so that an on-going check is made and recorded of children's progress in the different areas of learning. The staff identified a weakness in writing, as the children were not always linking sounds and letters. More opportunities are now provided for children to approach the early stages of writing, and a programme for teaching phonics has been introduced. The success of these actions has yet to be evaluated. The school is planning to locate the nursery alongside the Reception classes so that even closer links can be made between them, and a greater continuity of learning established.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that lessons are monitored more frequently and rigorously, and involve all those with management responsibilities.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well. In Key Stage 1 they build on the good start they make in the Foundation Stage and, at the end of Year 2, standards are above average. In Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities continue to respond to effective teaching and, as a result, standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average. Achievement in mathematics has not been as strong as in other subjects. In its development planning, the school has identified strategies to further raise rates of progress in mathematics so that these are more consistent across the school. These include increasing opportunities for problem solving and reviewing methods used in teaching computation. The school has also prioritised improvements in the teaching of writing and this is already having a noticeable impact on standards, particularly of older pupils. Teachers now have a good understanding of the small steps pupils need to take as they are developing their writing skills, and plan work accordingly. Pupils with LDD, and those for whom English is an additional language, also achieve well due to the excellent support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are extremely keen to attend school, and there have been no unauthorised absences in recent years. They make very good gains in developing confidence, independence and self-esteem throughout their school years. Older pupils make a very strong contribution to the caring ethos of the school through becoming playground buddies for younger pupils. Pupils contribute well to the local community through fund-raising activities, such as the shoe-box appeal. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength. They gain an extremely strong awareness of important values through personal, social and health education (PSHE), religious education, and school council activities. Their cultural awareness is developed very well through art and music, and themed events such as the arts week. Pupils readily choose healthy options in school meals and have access to fruit at breaks. These excellent personal skills, along with their high level of literacy, numeracy and computer skills, prepare pupils extremely well for their future life and learning.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

In the most effective lessons, teachers maintain a clear focus on learning objectives, have challenging expectations and regularly remind pupils of their learning goals. As a result, pupils are well motivated and have a positive approach to their learning. In a minority of lessons, work is not fully matched to all abilities and pupils make slower progress as a result. Well trained teaching assistants generally play a positive role, providing high quality support. However, there is some inconsistency in how teachers make full use of their abilities throughout lessons. Pupils' work is well marked and includes helpful and developmental comments. A strong feature is the involvement of children in self-assessment of their work. Consequently, they have a clear understanding of how to improve and the next steps in their learning. This is having a positive impact on improving writing standards, particularly in the upper part of the school.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum is very well matched to the needs of all pupils. It is very well planned to promote safe and healthy lifestyles through PSHE and other activities. A large number of educational trips, including residential visits, helps to bring learning to life and fosters personal and social development extremely well. The curriculum is enhanced by very good provision for music and modern foreign languages. An impressive range of well-attended extra curricular activities adds further enrichment. These include creative activities such as dance, recorders and choir, and sports such as tag rugby and running. The school works hard to continuously develop and improve its curriculum through staff and pupil evaluations of activities. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and pupils acquire very good computer skills to support their learning. Partnerships with local schools are used effectively to enhance creative aspects of provision, such as the 'Shape and Layer' project with the local specialist Arts College.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The school assigns an extremely high priority to the care and well being of all pupils. Child protection and all aspects of health and safety are very well managed. Pupils feel safe and are confident to seek help when they need it. One parent wrote, 'The school has a fantastic team ethos which is supportive of the children and each other'. The provision for pupils with LDD, those with English as an additional language, and those who are vulnerable, is excellent and includes small group and individual work. The school works very well with local services in supporting the learning and social and emotional well-being of these pupils. Pupils are very well guided in their learning through opportunities to assess for themselves how well they are doing, especially by referring to the individual targets they are set in literacy.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

Pupils' progress is very carefully monitored to ensure that all are on track to meet the challenging targets set for them. However, the monitoring of teaching is not as thorough, nor sufficiently

linked to the improvements set out in the school development plan. Despite this, the plan is comprehensive and sets out appropriate areas for improvement and the actions to be taken. However, it does not always provide measurable steps against which to evaluate fully the success of its actions, which to an extent restricts the monitoring role of the governing body when looking at school improvement. Governors, however, are very supportive of the work of the school, visit frequently and are involved in many of its activities. The school has given considerable thought to planning the alterations and extensions to its buildings, to maximise the benefits to pupils and staff. It has very good links with local schools, which particularly promote curriculum development. Links with parents are extremely strong, and they are fully encouraged to play a part in their children's education.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Radstock Primary School, Reading, RG6 5UZ

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with many of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, extremely polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Radstock Primary is a good school that has some outstanding features.

We liked these things the most.

- Children in Reception get a good start to their time in school.
- Unless you are ill, you take very little time off school.
- You work hard and enjoy your lessons.
- Your teachers are good at sharing with you what you are learning and how you can make your work even better.
- The school helps you when you find learning particularly difficult.
- The school makes sure that you are extremely safe and well looked after.
- You are able to learn different languages, go on lots of trips, and have many after school clubs to choose from.
- You know the importance of eating the right things and staying fit and healthy.
- You take your responsibilities very seriously. The peer mediators, playground buddies and lunch bunch are a great asset to the school.
- Your headteacher and staff do a really good job.

We have asked the school to work on the following thing now. It must check more frequently that lessons always enable each of you to do your very best and make good progress in what you are learning. You can play your part by continuing to work hard and enjoy your lessons.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector